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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper was to investigate how well the Kent State University Archives serves its users. A self-administered questionnaire of 15 questions was utilized and the survey was conducted during the spring semester of 1991. It was found that the majority of archive users are undergraduate students from Kent State University doing research related to a class, with the preponderance of them majoring in the humanities. Over 90% of the users surveyed had never used the archives before, and most of the users were directed to the archives by friends, library staff, or professors, as opposed to the online public access catalog. While there were some problems indicated, on the whole users found what they were looking for, perceived the staff as helpful, and registered reasonably high levels of satisfaction. The most important factor in determining satisfaction was the amount of material found by the students, although stringent security requirements appear to have intimidated some users and thereby affected their levels of satisfaction. Positive attitudes of a large percentage of first-time users suggest that the Kent State University Archives is a valuable, but underutilized, source of information. Further research is needed in several areas, including the connection between quantity, quality, and satisfaction. A copy of the questionnaire is appended. (60 references) (Author/DB)

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A SURVEY OF THE USERS OF THE KENT STATE UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

A Master's Research Paper submitted to the
Kent State University School of Library Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Library Science

by

John R. Brunswick

June, 1991

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research paper was to investigate how well the Kent State University Archives serves its users. A self administered questionnaire of fifteen questions was utilized and the survey was conducted during the spring semester of 1991. It was found that the majority of the users are undergraduate students from Kent State University doing research related to a class, with the predonderance of them majoring in the humanities. Over 90% of the users surveyed had never used the archives before, and most of the users were directed to the archives by friends, library staff, or professors, as opposed to the online public access catalog. While there was the indication of some problems, on the whole the users found what they were looking for, perceived the staff as helpful and registered reasonably high levels of satisfaction. The most important factor in determining satisfaction was the amount of material found by the user, although stringent security requirements appear to have intimidated some users and thereby affected their levels of satisfaction. High levels of satisfaction combined with a large percentage of first-time users would suggest that the Kent State University Archives is a valuable, but underutilized, source

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of information. Further research is needed in several areas, including the connection between quantity, quality, and satisfaction.

Master's Research Paper by

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CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

Background

The archives at an American university can be a lonely and forlorn place. A repository for arcane records and the personal papers of faculty members long gone to their reward, the university archives is seldom visited and less often used. Or at least that is how it used to be. Today, researchers are finding that a university's archival holdings can contain a wealth of information, especially in the field of social history, or "history from below." This new demand for information directly clashes with the traditional view of an archives as merely a place to store important, but unused, information. Starting in the 1980s, archivists were finding themselves faced with a number of questions for which they had no answers. Who uses the archives? What are they looking for? How will they use the information that they find? And, most importantly, what kind of job are archivists doing when it comes to satisfying patrons' needs? The answers are just starting to come in.

The Kent State University Archives is located on the eleventh floor of the library, with the reading room on the twelfth floor. The archives is a part of the Department of Special Collections and houses local historical material

concerning the city of Kent and Portage County, as well as materials relating to the history and operation of the university. One of the largest collections in the archives documents the tragic events of May 4, 1970. The Mission Statement for the Department of Special Collections is as follows:

> To collect, organize, preserve and interpret manuscripts, rare books and archival materials which will support teaching and research at Kent State University, enlighten the local community and engage the larger arena of scholars.[1]

The reading room contains inventories of the collections, and materials may also be located through the library's computerized catalog system, CATALYST.

The Rationale and Significance of the Study

The Mission Statement specifically connects the collection and preservation of archival material with its use by scholars and the community at large. And yet, up until now, no one has done a study to ascertain the level of service provided by the Kent State University Archives. General information has been gathered on who the users are through the User Registration form. There was also a survey performed in the spring of 1989. But neither of these has gone beyond asking for academic affiliation, academic status, type of project or research interests, and academic major or course requiring the project. No attempt has been made to find out if the person doing the research has found any useful material, or why that person even came to

the archives.

This lack of data on the users of archives is not limited to Kent State University. In 1982 Mary Jo Pugh, of the University of Michigan, analyzed the problems that both researchers and archivists have in accessing archival material. Although her article stressed the need for better indexing and finding aids, Pugh did point out that archivists ". . . do not know how users, whether scholarly or nonscholarly, approach the record."[2] Commenting on Pugh's article, David Bearman went a little further, and suggested that ". . . archivists will have to study who uses archival records and how the users approach them in order to design the information services of value to archivists and their clients."[3] This study is an attempt to add to both the knowledge about the users of the Kent State University archives and archives users in general.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study, then, is to investigate how well the Kent State University Archives satisfies it users, by conducting a survey of the users. This survey not only investigates who the users are, but also looks at how people are led to the archives, what they found, what they expected to find, and how they perceived the materials, the staff, and the archives in general. The information gathered should prove invaluable to the Kent State University Archives in detecting and correcting any areas of weakness.

It should also help point out the areas where the archives performs well and can direct the archives staff toward any other areas that might need further research. In all, this survey should be a valuable management tool for the university archivist and her staff.

Definition of Terms

Of course, not every user of the archives shows up on its doorstep. Some people call on the telephone looking for information, others write. But for the purposes of this paper, a "user" is defined as anyone who comes to the desk in the reading room on the twelfth floor of the Kent State University Library requesting to see material thought by the patron to be contained in the archives. This includes users who are looking for material which is not contained in the archives. In other others words, intent to use the archives will constitute use, even if a search turns up nothing. The survey does not include users who are looking for other material from Special Collections, such as rare books and manuscripts. "Satisfaction" will be determined by the patron, as will all other qualitative measures.

Limitations

There are a variety of limitations which might affect the usefulness of this study. First of all, this study will only look at the Kent State University Archives, which for several reasons (especially the history of the university)

differs from other university archives. Therefore, the the findings of this study will not be generalizable to other institutions. There is also the problem of question interpretation on the part of the respondent. Different people will inevitably interpret the questions and suggested answers in different ways. What is "very satisfied" for one person might be "somewhat satisfied" for another. This is a problem that even the most carefully constructed questionnaire cannot avoid. A third limitation is the nature of the research itself. This study does not purport to be investigating any underlying theoretical principles of librarianship. It is applied research. It is a snapshot of one university's archives at one time. The study is subject to all the hazards that any user survey of such a limited nature would encounter. But these limitations do not mean that this project is not worthwhile. On the contrary, because it is limited to the Kent State University Archives, the study promises to be a more precise problem-solving tool than a similar survey conducted elsewhere. While there will be no hypothesis tested in this particular case, it is expected that this survey will point to possible areas for hypothesis testing and more rigorous research. This is just a tentative first step in exploring the situation.

CHAPTER II - REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Surveys in the Library Setting

According to the University of Sheffield Centre for Research on User Studies:

> The general objective of research on users is to further understanding of the processes of information transfer. The research may be expected to lead to the improvement of information transfer systems of all types and to have implications for the organization of communication, the distribution of resources and the relationships between systems.[4]

It should come as no surprise to anyone in the field of librarianship that these sort of studies have been going on for a long time. Maurice Line notes that library surveys began to become a substantial part of library research in the 1930s, with library research and library surveys being regarded as "almost synonymous."[5] In January, 1936, William Converse Haygood conducted a survey of the patrons of the New York Public Library. He sought to find out who used the library, what they read, and what the patrons thought about the library.[6] Bernard Berelson, in 1949, published a work that was a synthesis of studies which had been conducted over two decades, including a national survey of public libraries. He too looked at the traditional questions of who, when, what, how much, and why.[7] In June 1964, the Public Libraries and Adult Education Committee for the North

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West (U.K.) agreed to sponsor a research project which examined the characteristics of library users and the image that they held of public library service.[8] There have also been user studies done in academic libraries, such as those by Nicholson and Bartlett,[9] and Rzasa and Moriarty.[10]

Recent research seems to be more narrow in its scope in the academic library, focusing on one or two particular phenomena of user behavior, rather than addressing the whole range. One area of study has been user success rates and its flip-side, user frustration. Basically, this measures how successful a patron is at locating a particular item within a library. Relevant work has been done by Urquhart and Schofield,[11] Saracevic, Shaw, and Kantor,[12] Rinkel and McCandless,[13] and most recently Knox and Wivell,[14] and Thompson.[15] Other areas of study include defining library use (Bookstein,[16] Yerbury[17]), testing questionnaire design (Pagell and Lusk[18]), identifying external users (Harris[19]), looking specifically at the needs of graduate students (Parrish[20]), and examining faculty liaison programs (Schloman, Lilly, and Hu[21]). This list is not meant to be exhaustive, or even representative, and only indicates the vast amount of user surveys that have been done by highlighting a few. There are a number of bibliographies, such as the one by the University of Sheffield,[22] which may be consulted for a more extensive listing.

Of course, when a methodology is employed as much as the user survey has been, there is bound to be a lot of critiques. Various authors, such as Hannabuss,[23] James,[24] Burns,[25] Wood,[26] Tauber,[27] and Cummins,[28] have all contributed their thoughts to the literature, with the appropriate caveats that usually accompany any discussion of the survey method. In fact, some criticisms have been quite strong, such as the article by Kidston,[29] which casts doubt on the validity of questionnaire responses, or the opinion piece by White,[30] who claims that librarians do not even conduct user studies, that they simply generate self-fulfilling prophecies. But regardless of all the warnings about library surveys, they are not an endangered species of research. As F. William Summers notes, surveys are easy to do, easy to understand, and relatively cheap. Because of this, surveys, ". . . like the poor, will be with us always."[31]

Surveys in the Archival Setting

However, when it comes to user surveys in the archival setting, the literature is a little more sparse. This appears to be a direct result of the opinion, until recently, that the main purpose of an archives was the storage of material, rather than its use. In 1975, Edith James Blendon ruminated on the function of university archives. Blendon felt that these archives contained a wealth of information that was not being tapped by the

scholarly community for a variety of reasons, and that use should be encouraged.[32]

Elsie T. Freeman of the National Archives, writing in the Spring 1984 issue of American Archivist, made a much more direct and coherent call to action. She claimed that archivists were operating under a number of misassumptions. They mistakenly assumed that they were oriented toward users, that they understood how research was done, that they provided adequate help, or that they even knew who the users of archives were. "Our information on who our users are," wrote Freeman, "is spotty because not much statistical information appears to be kept, nor it it disseminated when it is compiled." Freeman urged a national study of archives users and a restructuring of archival training programs.[33] In this same issue of American Archivist, William L. Joyce proposed that archives are cultural institutions with the responsibility of maintaining our "collective memory." Therefore ". . . archivists must recognize research use - the cultivation and maintenance of the collective memory - as their ultimate purpose."[34] It was becoming evident that the archival profession was moving toward a user-oriented perspective.

Freeman was heard from once again in 1985. Writing in The Midwestern Archivist, she drew an interesting analogy between why people buy something at a store and what researchers want from an archives. Giving credit to

Theodore Leavitt of the Harvard Business School, Freeman reminded the reader that a customer does not enter a store to buy quarter inch drill bits; they are interested in buying quarter inch holes. In other words, they are not interested in the tool so much as the results. Archivists, therefore, must not only learn who their users are, but what the users are producing, what the results are that these users are hoping for from their research.[35]

In 1986, William J. Maher considered the "use of user studies," and concluded that not enough were being done. Archivists could ill afford to ignore user studies because, as Maher claimed, "the more archivists know about the use of their holdings, the more ammunition they will have in the battle to convince people that archives really matter." Maher gave some useful suggestions on what should be studied, including reference correspondence and the dynamics that led a researcher to a particular archives.[36]

Bruce W. Dearstyne, writing on new approaches to the use of archival material, restated what by this time was becoming a popular refrain:

> Yet the ultimate goal of archival work is to identify and preserve information that is put to <u>use</u> by people for some deliberate purpose. The value of the records archivists so carefully collect and preserve depends on the importance of their information, and that, in turn, depends on who uses the records and for what purposes.[37]

This emphasis on user-oriented archival management is repeated by Dowler,[38] Goggin,[39] and Kenney,[40] to various degrees in <u>The American Archivist</u> Winter and Spring issues of

1988. Linda Long gave the theme a slight twist when she wrote on the issue of question negotiation in the archival setting, and its impact on the service provided to the patrons.[41] As recently as 1989, the subject of assessing user needs was still being hashed out, with Randall C. Jimerson noting that if archivists do not redefine their profession, they risk being lost in the headlong rush of the "information age." "Since use of archival materials is the goal to which all other activities are directed, archivists need to re-examine their priorities," Jimerson quoted the Society of American Archivists as urging.[42] He went on to state that:

> Archivists can survive the transition to a high-tech information society if they redefine their professional identity and role in society, undertake strategic planning, respond to the needs of resource allocators and public users, adopt a marketing and outreach orientation, and take a more assertive, outward-looking stance.[43]

As might be expected, not everyone shares the notion that the primary function of an archives is use. Roy C. Turnbaugh, writing in The Midwestern Archivist, feels that, while users are important, "appraisal and disposition of records are the key activities, and any definition of use should reflect such activity."[44] But Turnbaugh is clearly in the minority among archivists who have written on archival user studies recently.

Archivists are not the only ones concerned with user-oriented services. The users themselves have spoken out, most notably in The American Archivist. Historian Carl M.

Brauer has called for researcher evaluation of archives, with the results being made available to prospective donors.[45] Mary N. Speakman has expounded on the particular problems facing her in archives as a professional genealogist.[46] And Dale C. Mayer has written about how the new social history is affecting researchers and what their requirements are concerning archives.[47] The patrons are also calling for better service.

But for all the hue and cry over the lack of understanding of the users of archival materials, there is very little published on just who these users are. In 1977, John Burke published an article on the users of the Archives Office of New South Wales (Australia). His work was a condensed version of an official report that used data accumulated over a period of ten years by the archives itself. The study was very basic, with differentiation of users being made along lines of sex, address, subject of search, occupation and so forth.[48] In 1982, Burckel and Cook tried to synthesize information provided by archivists at ninety-five institutions of higher learning, and arrived at a "profile" of college and university archives in the United States, including some generalizations about who the users were.[49]

Jacqueline Goggin took an indirect approach to studying archives users. Through examining books written by researchers at the Library of Congress Manuscript Division

and noting the citations used, Goggin surmised that less than half of the authors had made good use of the material available to them. Goggin called for more studies to understand why these resources are being underutilized and to correct that situation if possible.[50]

Diane L. Beattie conducted a sort of hybrid study in 1985, utilizing both a questionnaire and a citation analysis in an attempt to determine the needs of researchers in the field of women's history. Her study did not address any archives in particular, but looked at how the researcher approached archives in general, including what types of materials and finding aids were most useful. Beattie concluded that archivists need to be more sensitive to the needs of historians researching women by both collecting more relevant material and providing better bibliographic control, especially through subject access.[51]

Paul Conway, of the Gerald R. Ford Library, seems to have gone the furthest in ascertaining user needs in an archival setting with his 1984 survey of four presidential libraries. Not intending to compare one library against another, Conway was seeking user patterns within groups of researchers, such as journalists, graduate students, and faculty members. Conway gathered the usual information that can be found on almost any registration form in an archives. But he also probed deeper, inquiring as to how well prepared a researcher was, what had been the researcher's initial

expectations of the archives, how useful the information would be to the researcher's project, and how satisfied the researcher was with the overall performance of the archives. Conway found, among other things, that researchers were most satisfied when they found useful material, regardless of the quality of service. In fact, researchers ". . .expect archival research to be tedious, time consuming, and frustrating." But, Conway wrote, archivists must make allowances for those who are intimidated by archives, or come inadequately prepared. Archives must become user-oriented and that means carrying out user studies. He concluded the following:

> Ultimately a user focus is a service focus. Good reference service, like good business, means discovering patron needs, developing the means to meet these needs, and following up to measure the impact of services. One of the worst disservices we have done to ourselves is to continually call reference service an art and to use that as an excuse to dismiss analysis of it.[52]

Conway continued to push for a better understanding of the users of archives, presenting a framework for studies in the Fall 1986 issue of American Archivist. Contending that individual library user studies are "not very useful" for studying the users of archives, Conway believed it was not so much a lack of will that was standing in the way of archival studies, but a lack of means. Archivists did not have the appropriate methodology for studying users. His framework was designed to correct that, its three objectives being the analysis of quality, integrity, and service.

That is, how well does an archives serve its patrons, what level of protection does it afford its material, and what good does its services accomplish? Conway suggested implementing his framework in the form of a "reference log," which would track users on a continual basis:

> The framework for studying the users of archives presented here is a first attempt to structure a comprehensive, profession-wide program. . . If tested and applied, the framework has the potential to help archivists compare and assess the results of individual studies.[53]

The relative lack of published studies on the users of archives indicates that Conway is probably still waiting.

In the spring of 1989, the Kent State University Department of Special Collections, of which the archives is a part, did conduct a user survey, as mentioned in Chapter I. The survey found that Special Collections patrons are largely undergraduate students at Kent State University. Graduate students from Kent came in a distant second, followed closely by faculty and students from other institutions. The most often cited reason for coming to Special Collections was for writing a paper. Personal research was the second most popular response. When asked what their academic affiliation was, English clearly dominated all other fields, with almost seven times the responses as the next two closest fields, History and Speech Communication. The survey did not attempt to measure overall user satisfaction or the usefulness of the materials located by researchers.[54]

CHAPTER III - METHODOLOGY

Instrument

The information on the users of the Kent State University Archives was gathered through a self-administered questionnaire, which was handed out at the reference desk in the twelfth-floor reading room of the Kent State University Library. The questionnaire, which consists of fifteen questions, not including the date of the visit, was pretested in January of 1991. Several minor adjustments were made and the actual survey was conducted from February 6, 1991, through May 12, 1991. Written instructions were made available to the archives staff in order to handle any questions from the respondents. The staff was also given a tally sheet on which to mark the number of questionnaires handed out, the number of patrons declining to fill out a questionnaire, and the number of repeat patrons who were not asked to fill out a questionnaire. There was an appropriate cover letter on Kent State University letterhead accompanying the questionnaire. See Appendix A for a sample of the cover letter and the questionnaire. The data gathered was analyzed using both SAS and SPSS.

Subjects

There were three ways for the respondents to return the questionnaire. The preferred way was for them to deposit the completed forms into a box in the reading room. If this was not possible, they could request an envelope to mail the questionnaire through the campus mail system. If this still caused a problem, they were provided with an addressed, stamped envelope in which to return their completed questionnaires.

An attempt was made to survey all visitors to the reading room who tried to use the archives, although it is likely that some were missed. If a visitor had already filled out a questionnaire during this period, she or he was not asked to fill out another one. The population of this survey, then, was the users of the Kent State University Archives. The sample was all users from February 6, 1991, through May 12, 1991, who filled out a questionnaire, and it excluded anyone who had already participated, or chose not to participate. Due to the nature of this survey and the anonymity guaranteed the participants, there was no follow-up of unreturned or incompleted questionnaires.

CHAPTER IV - FINDINGS

A total of ninety questionnaires were handed out with seventy-six being returned for a return rate of 84.4%. It must be noted that, although respondents were instructed to check only one response to each question, in a few cases there were multiple responses. There were also a few instances where one or more questions were left unaswered. The result is that the figures displayed in the charts below do not always add up to seventy-six. Following is a question by question description of what the patrons were asked and how they responded.

The respondent was asked to fill in the date of her or his visit to the archives. The number of users is displayed in table 1 by weeks. Table 1 shows that the majority of activity concerning the archives happened during the first half of the survey, with a virtual cessation during spring break (3/25-3/31) and a slower pace thereafter. It should be noted that the first time frame, 2/6-2/10, is not a full week because the survey was started on a Wednesday.

In question #1 the respondent was asked to indicate her or his academic affiliation and status. An "other" blank was provided. The information is shown in table 2.

Table 1.--Number of Users Surveyed by Date

Date	Number	Percent		Number	Percent
2/6-2/10	8	10.5	4/1-4/7	4	5.3
2/11-2/17	3	3.9	4/8-4/14	2	2.6
2/18-2/24	11	14.5	4/15-4/21	2	2.6
2/25-3/3	6	7.9	4/22-4/28	4	5.3
3/4-3/10	7	9.2	4/29-5/5	0	0.0
3/11-3/17	12	15.8	5/16-5/12	1	1.3
3/18-3/24	11	14.5	No Date	5	6.6
3/25-3/31	0	0.0	Total	76	100.0

Table 2.--Academic Affiliation and Status of the Users

Affiliation/Status	Number	Percent
Undergraduate student at KSU	43	52.4
Undergraduate student elsewhere	5	6.1
Master's student at KSU	5	6.1
Master's student elsehwere	5	6.1
Doctoral candidate at KSU	4	4.9
Doctoral candidate elsewhere	3	3.7
Faculty at KSU	4	4.9
Faculty elsewhere	0	0.0
Other	13	15.8
Total	82	100.0

As can be seen in table 2, the overwhelming majority of respondents were undergraduate students at Kent State University, far surpassing undergraduate students from other institutions. However, master's students were evenly divided between Kent and other schools, and doctoral candidates nearly so. Those who identified themselves as faculty members came soley from Kent. Question #1 was one of those questions where some respondents felt impelled to give more than one response, even though they had been instructed several times not to. This occured in two cases in question #1, with both respondents identifying themselves as faculty members at Kent State University, among other things. The "other" category concerned those respondents who fell outside of the academic community, and included Kent State University staff, local residents, and secondary level students from the area. Because there were no faculty from other instituions surveyed, that category has been dropped from the rest of the tables in this paper.

Question #2 was an open-ended question designed to ascertain the field or discipline of the respondent. While there has been an effort to maintain the diversity of the responses, some have been grouped under larger headings. For example, secondary education and elementary education have both been included under the larger heading "education." Still, as can be seen in table 3, the respondents came from a variety of backgrounds and interests.

Table 3.--Field or Discipline of the Users

Field or Discipline	Number	Percent
Education	21	27.7
Business and Finance	12	15.8
Secondary Level Student	5	6.6
Architecture and Design	4	5.3
Communications	4	5.3
Undecided or Blank	4	5.3
Fashion	3	4.0
History	3	4.0
Criminal Justice/Pre-Law	2	2.6
Geology	2	2.6
Kent State Staff	2	2.6
Library Science	2	2.6
Psychology	2	2.6
Sociology	2	2.6
Appraisal Secretary	1	1.3
Biology	1	1.3
English	1	1.3
Genealogy	1	1.3
Geography	1	1.3
Homemaker	1	1.3
Family Studies	1	1.3
Music	1	1.3
Total	76	100.0

For question #3, the patron was asked if she or he had previously used the Kent State University Archives. The results are displayed in table 4. Interestingly, almost 90 percent of those surveyed claimed that they had never used the Kent State University Archives before.

Question #4 asked the respondents what the type of project was that had brought them to the archives. Patrons were given fourteen specific projects and an "other" category from which to choose (FLIP stands for Freshman Library Instruction Program). The responses are displayed in table 5. As table 5 shows, homework was the most often cited reason for visiting the archives, followed by research paper and personal interest. School related work dominated the projects that brought users to the archives.

Question #5 was an open-ended question which asked the respondents to enter the general area of their research and, like question #4, the responses showed a wide range of interests, although most dealt with the university. Table 6 shows the top four responses. Obviously, an open-ended question of this sort does not easily lend itself to analysis, and the groupings tend to be somewhat arbitrary. Moreover, the number of requests for information on campus buildings reflects a particular class assignment. But what is interesting is the relatively low number of researchers seeking information on May 4, especially since the survey was conducted during the spring semester.

Table 4.--Previous Use of the Archives

Previous Use	Number	Percent
Yes	8	10.5
No	68	89.5
TOTAL	76	100.0

Table 5.--Projects of the Users

Project	Number	Percent
Homework	20	26.3
Course Paper	9	11.8
Research Paper	13	17.1
Senior's Thesis	1	1.3
Master's Thesis	1	1.3
PhD Dissertation	3	4.0
Conference Paper	0	0.0
Article for a Journal, Magazine, or Newspaper	1	1.3
Writing a Book	1	1.3
For Use in Teaching	4	5.3
Genealogy	2	2.6
Personal Interest	11	14.5
FLIP	0	0.0
Other	10	13.2
TOTAL	76	100.0

Table 6.--Four Most Popular Topics of the Users' Projects

Topic	Number	Percent of Total
Building on Campus	23	30.3
History of KSU	8	10.5
May 4, 1970	7	9.2
Local History	4	5.3

Question #6 attempted to find out how the patron was led to the Kent State University Archives in the first place. The respondents were given ten specific answers and an "other" category from which to choose. Table 7 shows the results. Because of multiple answers, the total number of responses is more than the seventy-six questionnaires returned. By combining the first two reponses, one can see that close to one third of those surveyed answered that they were led to the archives by someone from outside of the library. Approximately one fifth found their way to the archives through the computerized catalog.

How the users found their way to the archives was compared to the academic affiliation and status of the user. This information is displayed by cross-tabulation in table 8, with percentages showing how each academic affiliation and status grouping responded.

Table 7.--How the Users Were Directed to the Archives

How Directed	Number	Percent
My teacher or professor suggested that I look here	16	20.2
A friend, colleague, or fellow student suggested that I look here	11	13.9
I was led here by a citation in a book or journal article	1	1.3
I read about the archives in a magazine or a newspaper	1	1.3
Someone else in the KSU library directed me here	14	17.7
Someone at another library or archives directed me here	0	0.0
I called the archives and asked if the information I needed would be here	5	6.3
I felt that this was the logical place to look	10	12.7
I have done research here before and knew the information was here	1	1.3
The library's computerized catalog told me the information was here	15	19.0
Other	5	6.3
TOTAL	79	100.0

Table 8.--How Users Were Directed to the Archives by Academic Affiliation and Status of the Users

How Directed	KSU UG	Oth UG	KSU MS	Oth MS	KSU DC	Oth DC	KSU Fac	Other
Teacher or professor	13 28.2%	2 40%	1 20%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Friend, colleague, student	10 21.7%	0 0%	1 20%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Citation	1 2.2%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Read about archives	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 20%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
KSU library	11 23.9%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	3 25%
Another library or archives	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Called archives	1 2.2%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 25%	3 25%
Logical place	5 10.9%	1 20%	0 0%	1 20%	1 25%	1 33.3%	1 25%	3 25%
Research before	0 0%	0 0%	1 20%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Computerized catalog	5 10.9%	2 40%	2 40%	3 60%	3 75%	0 0%	2 50%	1 8.3%
Other	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	2 66.7%	0 0%	2 16.7%
TOTAL	46 100%	5 100%	5 100%	5 100%	4 100%	3 100%	4 100%	12 100%

UG=Undergraduate, MS=Master's student, DC=Doctoral candidate, Fac=Faculty member. Responses relating to how the patron was directed to the archives are in abbreviated form in their original order.

The responses that covered the widest range of academic affiliation and status were that the archives was the logical place to look and that the computerized catalog had directed the user to the archives. Kent State University undergraduate students were most often directed to the archives by a teacher or professor, although having been directed by someone else in the KSU library or by a friend, colleague or fellow student were also very popular responses.

In question #7, the respondents were asked to indicate how successful their search for information was. The information is displayed in table 9.

Table 9.--Amount of Material the Users Found

Amount of Material	Number	Percent
I found more than I was looking for	12	16.2
I found exactly what I was looking for	33	44.6
I found some of what I was looking for	21	28.4
I found little of what I was looking for	7	9.5
I found none of what I was looking for	1	1.3
TOTAL	74	100.0

Of the seventy-four responses received for question #7, only one person answered that she or he had found nothing. Over 60 percent of the responses indicated that the users

had either found more than they were looking for or exactly what they were looking for in the archives.

How successful a patron was in her or his search was also compared with the academic affilation and status of the patron as well as whether or not the patron had ever used the archives before. This information is shown by cross-tabulation in tables 10 and 11, respectively, with percentages showing how each academic affiliation and status grouping responded. Patrons who had checked the "other" blank for academic affiliation and status were most likely to find more than what they were looking for, while those who found exactly what they were looking for were spread throughout the range of academic affiliation and status. Kent State University Master's students and Doctoral candidates all contended that they found exactly what they were looking for, while the same types of researchers from other institutions reported varying levels of success, with two of them finding little of what they were looking for.

Those who had previously used the archives indicated that they had mixed results from their efforts, with all categories registering responses except for "found none." In fact, the "found some" category was the most often checked response among those who had visited the archives before, whereas the most often checked response by those using the archives for the first time was "found exactly."

Table 10.--Amount of Material the Users Found by Academic Affiliation and Status of the Users

Amount of Material	KSU UG	Oth UG	KSU MS	Oth MS	KSU DC	Oth DC	KSU Fac	Other
Found more	5	1	0	1	0	0	0	6
	12.2%	20%	0%	20%	0%	0%	0%	46.1%
Found exactly	16	4	5	3	4	2	2	3
	39%	80%	100%	60%	100%	66.7%	50%	23.1%
Found some	15	0	0	0	0	0	2	3
	36.6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	23.1%
Found little	4	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
	9.8%	0%	0%	20%	0%	33.3%	0%	7.7%
Found none	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2.4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
TOTAL	41	5	5	5	4	3	4	13
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

UG=Undergraduate, MS=Master's student, DC=Doctoral candidate, Fac=Faculty member. Responses relating to what the patron found are in abbreviated form in their original order.

Table 11.--Amount of Material the Users Found by Previous Use of the Archives

Amount of Material	Previous Use Yes	No
Found more	1 12.5%	11 16.6%
Found exactly	2 25%	31 47%
Found some	3 37.5%	18 27.3%
Found little	2 25%	5 7.6%
Found none	0 0%	1 1.5%
TOTAL	8 100%	66 100%

In question #8, the respondent was asked to indicate to what degree her or his expectations were met when it came to locating material. The information is presented in table 12. Slightly over half of those responding reported that they had found more than what they expected or exactly what they expected. Only two users out of seventy-one indicated that they had been totally disappointed in their expectations. This information was also compared by cross-tabulation with the academic affiliation and status of the users (table 13), whether or not the users had visited the archives before (table 14), and what the users found (table 15).

Table 12.--How Well the Expectations of the Users Were Met

Expectations Met	Number	Percent
I found more than I expected	17	23.9
I found exactly what I expected	22	31.0
I found some of what I expected	22	31.0
I found little of what I expected	8	11.3
I found none of what I expected	2	2.8
TOTAL	71	100.0

In all categories of academic affiliation and status, over half of the users found at least some of what they had expected. Undergraduates from other institutions seemed to have more realistic expectations than did KSU undergraduates, while the situation was reversed for doctoral candidates and just about even for master's students. Users who checked "other" ranked highest in the "more than expected" category.

Previous use did not seem to have that much of an impact on how well a user's expectations were met, although the two respondents who had checked that they had found none of what they had expected had not used the archives before, as table 14 shows.

Table 13.--How Well the Expectations of the Users Were Met by Academic Affiliation and Status of the Users

Expectations Met	KSU UG	Oth UG	KSU MS	Oth MS	KSU DC	Oth DC	KSU Fac	Other
More than expected	9 22.5%	2 40%	0 0%	1 25%	1 25%	1 33.3%	1 25%	5 45.4%
Exactly expected	11 27.5%	3 60%	4 80%	2 50%	3 75%	0 0%	1 25%	1 9.1%
Some of expected	14 35%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 33.3%	2 50%	4 36.4%
Little of expected	5 12.5%	0 0%	0 0%	1 25%	0 0%	1 33.3%	0 0%	1 9.1%
None of expected	1 2.5%	0 0%	1 20%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
TOTAL	40 100%	5 100%	5 100%	4 100%	4 100%	3 100%	4 100%	11 100%

UG=Undergraduate, MS=Master's student, DC=Doctoral candidate, Fac=Faculty member. Responses relating to a patron's expecations are in abbreviated form in their original order.

Table 14.--How Well the Expectations of the Users Were Met by Previous Use of the Archives

Expectations Met	Previous Use Yes	No
More than expected	1 12.5%	16 25.4%
Exactly expected	2 25%	20 31.7%
Some of expected	3 37.5%	19 30.2%
Little of expected	2 25%	6 9.5%
None of expected	0 0%	2 3.2%
TOTAL	8 100%	63 100%

Table 5 shows that, for the most part, there is a close relationship between what a user was looking for and what that user expected to find. The largest deviation from this trend is that 21.9% of the users who found exactly what they were looking for also found more than they had expected.

Question #9 was designed to find out how useful the material that was found would be to the user. The results are displayed in table 16. Well over half of the patrons surveyed found the material that they had located to be very useful, while less than 10% found the material to be of little or no use to them.

Table 15.--How Well the Expectations of the Users Were Met by Amount of Material the Users Found

Expectations Met	Found more	Found exactly	Found some	Found little	Found none
More than expected	9 90%	7 21.9%	1 4.8%	0 0%	0 0%
Exactly expected	1 10%	21 65.6%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Some of expected	0 0%	3 9.4%	19 90.4%	0 0%	0 0%
Little of expected	0 0%	0 0%	1 4.8%	7 100%	0 0%
None of expected	0 0%	1 3.1%	0 0%	0 0%	1 100%
TOTAL	10 100%	32 100%	21 100%	7 100%	1 100%

Table 16.--Usefulness of the Material the Users Found

Usefulness	Number	Percent
Very useful	48	65.8%
Somewhat useful	13	17.8%
Not very useful	3	4.1%
Not useful at all	4	5.5%
I do not know yet	5	6.8%
TOTAL	73	100.0%

Question #10 asked the patron to rate the physical condition of the material examined. The information is displayed in table 17. By a wide margin, the patrons who were surveyed felt that the material they had looked at was in excellent or good condition, with less than 3% checking "fair," and none checking "poor."

Table 17.--Condition of the Material Found by the Users

Condition	Number	Percent
Excellent	49	66.2%
Good	22	29.7%
Fair	2	2.7%
Poor	0	0.0%
Not applicable	1	1.4%
TOTAL	74	100.0%

Question #11 queried the patron as to whether she or he had used an index in looking for material, and if so, was the index helpful. The results are shown in table 18. While less than half of the respondents claimed that they used an index to locate material, over 90% of those who did felt that the index was helpful to them in their quest.

Question #12 asked the patron to rate the staff on helpfulness. The results are displayed in table 19. Clearly, the staff of the Kent State University Archives

received high marks for helpfulness from the users who were surveyed, with 92% of the respondents rating the as "very helpful." The remaining 8% rated the staff as being "somewhat helpful," and no one rated the staff as being "not very helpful" or "not helpful at all."

Table 18.-- Users Who Used an Index

Index Use	Number	Percent
Used an index	32	42.1%
Did not use an index	44	57.9%
TOTAL	76	100.0%
Found the index helpful	29	90.6%
Did not find the index helpful	3	9.4%
TOTAL	32	100.0%

Table 19.--Helpfulness of Staff

Helpfulness	Number	Percent
Very helpful	69	92.0%
Somewhat helpful	6	8.0%
Not very helpful	0	0.0%
Not helpful at all	0	0.0%
TOTAL	75	100.0%

Question #13 asked the patron how easy the archives was to use. The results are displayed in table 20. Over 90% of the users surveyed found the archives "very easy" or "somewhat easy" to use. Less than 10% found the archives "somewhat difficult" to use and none found the archives "very difficult" to use.

Table 20.--How Easy the Archives Was to Use

Ease of Use	Number	Percent
Very easy	52	70.3%
Somewhat easy	16	21.6%
Somewhat difficult	6	8.1%
Very difficult	0	0.0%
TOTAL	74	100.0%

Ease of use was compared, using cross-tabulation, with academic affiliation and status, and with whether or not the patron had used the archives previously. The results are shown in tables 21 and 22. While over half of the Kent State University undergraduate students rated the archives as very easy to use, they also seemed to have the most trouble using the archives of all of the groups, including undergraduate students from other institutions and those who checked "other." Kent undergraduate students were the only group who found the archives "somewhat difficult" to use.

Table 21.--How Easy the Archives Was to Use by Academic Affiliation and Status of the Users

Ease of Use	KSU UG	Oth UG	KSU MS	Oth MS	KSU DC	Oth DC	KSU Fac	Other
Very easy	24 58.6%	5 100%	4 80%	5 100%	3 75%	2 66.7%	4 100%	11 84.6%
Somewhat easy	11 26.8%	0 0%	1 20%	0 0%	1 25%	1 33.3%	0 0%	2 15.4%
Somewhat difficult	6 14.6%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Very difficult	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
TOTAL	41 100%	5 100%	5 100%	5 100%	4 100%	3 100%	4 100%	13 100%

UG=Undergraduate, MS=Master's student, DC=Doctoral candidate, Fac=Faculty member.

Table 22.--How Easy the Archives Was to Use by Previous Use of the Archives

Ease of Use	Previous Use Yes	No
Very easy	5 62.5%	47 71.2%
Somewhat easy	3 37.5%	13 19.7%
Somewhat difficult	0 0%	6 9.1%
Very difficult	0 0%	0 0%
TOTAL	8 100%	66 100%

Remarkedly, all of the patrons who had had any difficulty using the archives had never used it before. Previous visitors all reported that the archives was either "very easy" or "somewhat easy" to use.

Question #14 strikes at the very heart of this research paper by asking how satisfied overall the patron was with her or his visit to the archives. Because this is the most important question of the survey, numerous other questions were compared with it using cross-tabulation analysis. Table 23 shows the results of question #14 itself.

Table 23.--Satisfaction Level of the Users

Satisfaction Level	Number	Percent
Very satisfied	53	71.6%
Somewhat satisfied	17	23.0%
Somewhat unsatisfied	2	2.7%
Very unsatisfied	2	2.7%
TOTAL	74	100.0%

A little over 70% of the patrons surveyed felt that they were "very satisfied" with their visit to the archives. And yet, four patrons were unsatisfied, with two of them being "very unsatisfied." Perhaps a comparison with some of the other results might reveal why.

Table 24 displays the relationship between academic affiliation and status and the patron's level of satisfaction. As with ease of use, the patrons who rated their overall satisfaction with the archives the lowest were Kent State University undergraduates. People who were not students or faculty, that is, those who checked "other," were all "very satisfied" with their visit.

The second factor to be compared with satisfaction is whether or not the patron had previously used the archives. The information is given in table 25. While it should be noted that both of the users who marked themselves as being "very unsatisfied" had not used the archives previously, there does not seem to be a strong relationship between previous use and level of satisfaction.

The next comparison to be considered is between satisfaction level and what the patron found. The results are shown in table 26. Those patrons who found at least some of what they were looking for tended to have a higher level of satisfaction with their visit to the archives than those patrons who found little or none of what they were looking for. In general, as the amount of material found declined, so did the level of satisfaction.

The level of a patron's satisfaction can also be compared with how well that patron's expectations were met. The results are displayed below in table 27.

Table 24.--Satisfaction Level of the Users by Academic Affiliation and Status of the Users

Satisfaction Level	KSU UG	Oth UG	KSU MS	Oth MS	KSU DC	Oth DC	KSU Fac	Other
Very satisfied	24 58.5%	5 100%	4 80%	4 80%	4 100%	2 66.7%	4 100%	13 100%
Somewhat satisfied	13 31.7%	0 0%	1 20%	1 20%	0 0%	1 33.3%	0 0%	0 0%
Somewhat unsatisfied	2 4.9%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Very unsatisfied	2 4.9%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Total	41 100%	5 100%	5 100%	5 100%	4 100%	3 100%	4 100%	13 100%

UG=Undergraduate, MS=Master's student, DC=Doctoral candidate, Fac=Faculty member.

Table 25.--Satisfaction Level of the Users by Previous Use of the Archives

Satisfaction Level	Previous Use Yes	No
Very satisfied	5 62.5%	48 72.7%
Somewhat satisfied	2 25%	15 22.7%
Somewhat unsatisfied	1 12.5%	1 1.5%
Very unsatisfied	0 0%	2 3.1%
TOTAL	8 100%	66 100%

Table 26.-- Satisfaction Level of the Users by Amount of Material the Users Found

Satisfaction Level	Found more	Found exactly	Found some	Found little	Found none
Very satisfied	12 100%	28 84.8%	12 57.1%	1 16.7%	0 0%
Somewhat satisfied	0 0%	5 15.2%	9 42.9%	2 33.3%	0 0%
Somewhat unsatisfied	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	2 33.3%	0 0%
Very unsatisfied	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 16.7%	1 100%
TOTAL	12 100%	33 100%	21 100%	6 100%	1 100%

Table 27.--Satisfaction Level of the Users by How Well the Expectations of the Users Were Met

Satisfaction Level	More than exp.	Exactly what exp.	Some of exp.	Little of exp.	None of exp.
Very satisfied	17 100%	19 86.4%	13 59.1%	1 14.3%	0 0%
Somewhat satisfied	0 0%	3 13.6%	9 40.9%	3 42.8%	1 50%
Somewhat unsatisfied	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	2 28.6%	0 0%
Very unsatisfied	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 14.3%	1 50%
TOTAL	17 100%	22 100%	22 100%	7 100%	2 100%

As one might expect, the less a patron's expectations were met, the lower the level of satisfaction. All of the patrons who found more then they had expected reported that they were "very satisfied."

The next area to examine in comparison with level of satisfaction is how useful the material found was to the patron. This information is shown in table 28. As the perceived level of usefulness declined, so did the level of satisfaction, although one patron who found no useful material still reported being "very satisfied." All of the patrons who did not yet know how useful their material would be registered some level of satisfaction, with 80% being "very satisfied."

Another factor to consider in conjunction with level of satisfication is whether or not the patron had used an index and, if so, was the index helpful. The results are shown below in table 29. More than 90% of those surveyed who used an index reported themselves as being at least "somewhat satisfied", with the majority being "very satisfied." However, those who reported themselves as not having used an index registered even higher levels of satisfaction. All of those who used an index and were unsatisfied reported that the index had not been helpful to them in their search.

Table 28.--Satisfaction Level of the Users by Usefulness of the Material the Users Found

Satisfaction Level	Very useful	Somewhat useful	Not very useful	Not useful	Do not know
Very satisfied	44 91.7%	4 30.8%	0 0%	1 25%	4 80%
Somewhat satisfied	4 8.3%	8 61.5%	1 50%	1 25%	1 20%
Somewhat unsatisfied	0 0%	1 7.7%	1 50%	0 0%	0 0%
Very unsatisfied	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	2 50%	0 0%
TOTAL	48 100%	13 100%	2 100%	4 100%	5 100%

Table 29.--Satisfaction Level of the Users by Users Who Used an Index

Satisfaction Level	Index Used	Index Not Used	Index Helpful	Index Not Helpful
Very satisfied	19 59.3%	34 81%	19 65.5%	0 0%
Somewhat satisfied	10 31.3%	7 16.6%	10 34.5%	0 0%
Somewhat unsatisfied	1 3.1%	1 2.4%	0 0%	1 33.3%
Very unsatisfied	2 6.3%	0 0%	0 0%	2 66.7%
TOTAL	32 100%	42 100%	29 100%	3 100%

The user's level of satisfaction can also be matched up against how helpful the user perceived the staff to be. The results are shown in table 30.

Table 30.--Satisfaction Level of the Users by Helpfulness of Staff

Satisfaction Level	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Not very helpful	Not helpful
Very satisfied	52 76.5%	1 16.7%	0 0%	0 0%
Somewhat satisfied	13 19.1%	4 66.6%	0 0%	0 0%
Somewhat unsatisfied	1 1.5%	1 16.7%	0 0%	0 0%
Very unsatisfied	2 2.9%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
TOTAL	68 100%	6 100%	0 0%	0 0%

It would appear that level of satisfaction is not influenced to any great degree by how helpful the staff is perceived to be by the patron. The two people who responded that they were "very unsatisfied" also rated the staff as being "very helpful." However, it should be noted that two-thirds of the patrons who were "somewhat satisfied" considered the staff "somewhat helpful." While helpfulness on the part of the staff may not be a determining factor for level of satisfaction, it may be a contributing factor.

The last comparison to be made is between level of satisfaction and ease of use. Table 31 shows the results.

Table 31.--Satisfaction Level of the Users by How Easy the Archives Was to Use

Satisfaction Level	Very easy	Somewhat easy	Somewhat difficult	Very difficult
Very satisfied	45 88.2%	8 50%	0 0%	0 0%
Somewhat satisfied	4 7.8%	8 50%	4 66.6%	0 0%
Somewhat unsatisfied	1 2%	0 0%	1 16.7%	0 0%
Very unsatisfied	1 2%	0 0%	1 16.7%	0 0%
TOTAL	51 100%	16 100%	6 100%	0 0%

The tendency seems to be that those who found the archives easiest to use also had the highest levels of satisfaction, although some of the patrons who found the archives easy to use were nonetheless unsatisfied. As with the helpfulness of the staff, ease of use is probably not that strong of a factor in determining levels of satisfaction, but it can be part of the mix of factors which does.

The last question, #15, sought to elicit from the user any additional information, complaints, suggestions, or clarifications of previous answers. Thirty-one respondents

opted to write something in the space provided, and sometimes their comments fell into more than one category. Five of these responses could be characterized as neutral or unclear, such as the one which simply reads "photocopy." Eleven of the users made comments which, on the whole, could be called complimentary or positive. Of these eleven, nine users specifically mentioned the staff, pointing out their helpfulness and professionalism. In addition, three responses noted the physical attractiveness of the reading room itself, while one user stressed the number of resources available.

Fifteen of the users surveyed made comments which indicated, overall, some sort of a problem or dissatisfaction with their visits to the archives. Three users, including one user who was among those whose comments were on the whole positive, requested better indexing of materials. Three other users complained about the hours that the archives is open, with one respondent chiding "lunch hour closure silly." Two researchers were unhappy not to find more on their subjects, and another two users rued the amount of time it took for their material to be delivered. One person wanted to know why the "T.V." (probably the weekly television guides) was in Special Collections, and another was ... "disappointed not to find a circulating copy of a Master's thesis." One user, who had checked that the staff was "somewhat helpful," felt that

"... some of the staff were short in their answers and seemed annoyed by the fact that students actually needed to use their resources." But far and away, the major complaint seemed to center around the security of the collection. Seven users had a problem with this aspect of the archives, whether it be filling out the proper forms or checking their personal belongings. "The archives are (sic) like Fort Knox," complained one Kent State University undergraduate. "I was not planning to steal one of your hangers!" exclaimed another. "I don't see why we are not allowed to have and (sic) coats and belongings with us while we work," wrote a third. Clearly, there was a lack of understanding on the part of these users for the need to maintain a secure environment for archival and rare materials, and it is interesting to note that of the seven, six were undergraduates at Kent State University (the seventh was a high school student).

Of the eleven users whose comments were mostly positive, all checked that they were "very satisfied" with their visits. Of the fifteen users whose comments were mostly negative, only four reported being "very satisfied." All five of the users whose comments were either neutral or unclear reported themselves as being "very satisfied." The reader needs to be aware that whether a comment was negative or positive is purely a subjective matter, and two different researchers might view the same comment differently.

CHAPTER V - SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Unfortunately, this study was of too short a duration to gather enough responses for a really good look at the users of the Kent State University Archives. As stated before, this is a "snapshot" of the archives, a picture of only one semester of use. Different semesters will probably bring users with somewhat different goals and priorities. However, it is possible to discern some trends that occured during the study, and these trends might be suggestive of further, more long term, investigation into the behavior of archives users.

The study revealed that, during the period considered, the majority of the users of the Kent State University Archives were undergraduate students from Kent itself. A large portion of the work they did in the archives was related to their studies at the university, and they came from a wide array of disciplines. Almost 90% of the users surveyed had never used the archives before. This would seem to indicate that the archives does serve as a source of information for the students of the university, but that it is an underutilized source.

Related to this is how the users were directed to the archives. While 19% of the total number of users surveyed

checked that the library's computerized catalog had helped them become aware of material in the archives, only 10.9% of the Kent State University undergraduate students cited the computerized catalog as directing them to the archives. These undergraduates relied more on others, be it library staff, friends or professors, to direct them to the archives.

When the amount of material found by the users is considered, it becomes even more clear that, when used, the archives can be a fertile source of information. Over 60% of those responding found what they were looking for, and, out of seventy-four users, only one found nothing. But here again, it would appear that the undergraduate students of Kent had the most problems of all the users, with close to half finding only some of what they were looking for or even less. Oddly enough, previous use of the archives did not seem to be a reliable indicator of success when it came to locating information, with well over 60% of the previous users finding only some of what they were looking for or less.

The archives did not fare quite as well when it came to meeting the expectations of the users. Only 54.9% of those surveyed felt that the archives met or surpassed their expectations in terms of having the sought after materials, while the rest were somewhat less enthusiastic. Not surprisingly, the Kent State University undergraduate

students tended to rate their expecations as not having been fully met, with slightly over half finding only some of what they expected or less. However, other groups also had problems with this category, notably doctoral candidates from other instituions and Kent State University faculty. Once again, having previously used the archives did not seem to help, and those who reported previous use were less likely to have had their expectations met than first time users. As one might have guessed, how well a user's expectations were met is directly related to how much material the user found, although it is by no means a perfect fit. Over 20% of the users who reported finding exactly what they were looking for also found more than they had expected. Obviously, some of the users were surprised by the wealth of information that can be found in the archives.

The usefulness of the material found and the condition of that material both received high marks from the users. Less than 10% of the respondents found material that they felt was of little or no use to them, while none of the users found material that they considered to be in poor condition.

Over half of the users claimed that they did not use an index when they visited the archives, but of those who did a remarkable 90.6% found the index helpful to them in their quest. Perhaps those who checked that they did not

use an index actually did and were not aware of what an index is.

There is no bad news to report on the staff, with over 90% of the respondents rating them as "very helpful." When it comes to ease of use, the users were a little less generous, with slightly more than 70% finding the archives "very easy" to use. Once again, Kent undergraduates seemed to have the most trouble using the archives, with only 58.6% finding it "very easy" to use. This time, previous use did seem to have an impact. While those who had used the archives before were less likely to check "very easy" than those who had not used the archives previously, all of the users who found the archives "somewhat difficult" to use were first time vistors. Certainly one would expect that as a user became more familiar with the archives that she or he would find it easier to use.

But the true measure of how well the archives is performing its job is whether or not the users are satisfied with their visits. Almost 95% of those surveyed reported being at least "somewhat satisfied," with over 70% being "very satisfied." This speaks well of the archives and its staff. All four of the respondents who reported themselves as being "somewhat unsatisfied" or "very unsatisfied" were Kent State University undergraduate students. All five undergraduate students from other instituions reported themselves as being "very satisfied," as did those who had

checked "other" for their academic affiliation. Of the four unsatisfied users, only one had visited the archives previously. Three of them had used an index, but none had found the index used helpful to them. Three of these disgruntled users had also rated the staff as being "very helpful", while two found the archives "very easy" to use. However, two of these users found the archives "somewhat difficult" to use, and this may have contributed to their dissatisfaction.

The most telling relationships are those that exist between the nature of the material found and the level of satisfaction. The level of satisfaction drops noticably as the amount of material found by the user becomes less. All four of the unsatisfied users found little or none of what they were looking for. On the other hand, those who found more than what they were looking for all reported themselves as being "very satisfied." The same holds true for how well the user's expectations were met. The four undergraduates who rated their satisfaction levels the lowest also found little or none of what they had expected while those who found more than they had expected were all "very satisfied." Oddly enough, 15.2% of those who found "exactly" what they were looking for and 13.6% of those who found "exactly" what they had expected reported themselves as only being "somewhat satisfied." In general, though, users who found what they were looking for and what they had expected were

pleased with their visit.

Users were also pleased when the material they found was useful to them. Three of the four unsatisfied users reported that the material they had found, if any, was either "not very useful" or "not useful." However, one unsatisfied user felt that the material she or he had located was "somewhat useful," and, of the forty-eight users who reported that their material was "very useful," a puzzling 8.3% were only "somewhat satisfied." The amount of material found would appear to be more important in the eyes of the user than the quality of the material found.

All of this tends to confirm the conclusions made by Paul Conway.[55] That is, patrons are most concerned with finding information when they visit an archives, not with how helpful the staff may be or whether or not the archives is easy to use. People come to an archives because they have an information need and, when that need is satisfied the user is satisfied. It is not that these other factors are unimportant. It is just that they are subordinate to the driving force behind the use of an archives, which is the need for information.

This research supports another assertation made by Conway, and that is that allowances must be made for those who are intimidated by archives.[56] As question #15 clearly shows, a number of users are put off by the security arrangements of the Kent State University Archives. It is

not that security needs to be lessened, but awareness on the part of the users needs to be heightened. The one user who claimed that, as a college student, she or he would not deface any material, is obviously oblivious to the amount of destruction that takes place throughout the library.

Without question, it would have been better to have more respondents to the survey. But one cannot drag users into the archives. With the limited number of response garnered, it can be said that the typical user of the Kent State University Archives during the spring of 1991 was an undergraduate student from Kent itself. She or he came to the archives to complete a class assignment and generally found some of the material that was sought. Satisfaction levels were high and the staff did a wonderful job. In all, the archives would appear to be a valuable resource to Kent State University.

Recommendations for Further Study

As with most exploratory research, this study brings forth more questions than it answers. Several areas are in need of more extensive investigation. Why, for example, do undergraduate students from Kent State University have the most trouble of all the groups when it comes to using the archives? Is it that Kent does a poorer job of preparing them than other instituions? Or do only the most dedicated students travel from elsewhere to Kent, while the Kent student merely has to take the elevator to the twelfth

floor?

Why were so many of those surveyed coming to the archives for the first time? Is it that they never had a need before, or did they not know what the archives had to offer? Could it be that they perceived the archives as being too intimidating or difficult to use? If some of these same users had been surveyed on subsequent visits, would their level of satisfaction have gone up or down?

Another area that needs to be addressed is the use of indexes and the online public access catalog.. If such a large percentage of those who used the indexes found them helpful, why is it that most people do not use them? Is it that they do use an index but cannot identify one, or that they do not even know that such aids exist? Are users not consulting the catalog because they do not know to, or is it that what they are looking for is not listed in the library's system?

But perhaps the most fruitful research possibilities lie in the area of user satisfaction and its connection to the nature of the user's information need and its fulfillment. Are some users coming to the archives with unreasonable expectations? Are they coming properly prepared? Is there some way to make their searches more productive? What is the connection between quantity, quality, and satisfaction?

What needs to be initiated is a survey of greater length and rigor. Perhaps, in the case of Kent State University, it might be wise to include all of the Department of Special Collections in the survey. This way, all of the visitors to the reading room would be surveyed, not just those intending to use the archives. This would allow for a survey to be conducted within the framework of the reference interview and entered into the sort of reference log suggested by Conway.

Certainly, more work needs to be done. The Kent State University Archives is an essential part of the university. It provides information which is unique and not available elsewhere. How the archives serves its users is as important as what the archives collects, for the end goal of collection is eventual use. This research has been a tentative first step. It is hoped that the foundation which has been laid will be built upon, to the benefit of both the archives and its users.

School of Library Science
(216) 672-2782

Kent STATE UNIVERSITY
Kent, Ohio 44242-0001

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES USER SURVEY

Thank you for taking a few minutes of your time to complete this questionnaire.

My name is John Brunswick, and I am a graduate student in the School of Library Science here at Kent State University. The purpose of this survey is to ascertain how well the Kent State University Archives is serving its patrons. The goal is to provide you, the user, with a more useful and responsive reference tool.

To insure the validity of this survey, I need the complete and frank response of every user during the period in which the survey is conducted. Be assured that not only is your response valued, it will also be kept strictly confidential.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Please take some time to fill out the questionnaire once you have completed your research for the day. If you have already filled out a questionnaire on a previous visit, please return this blank one to the person at the desk in the reading room.

2. Please answer all questions completely. Make any necessary clarifications in the space provided in question #15.

3. Please mark only one answer for each question, picking the one that is most appropriate.

4. Do not sign the questionnaire.

5. When completed, please put the questionnaire in the envelope provided and deposit it in the box by the desk in the reading room. If you cannot complete the questionnaire at this time, you can return it in the envelope through the campus mail. If this is inconvenient, you may instead request a stamped envelope which can be mailed to me.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to call or write me. All inquiries will be answered. A copy of the completed research will be made available upon request. Once again, thank you for your cooperation.

John Brunswick
School of Library Science
Room #314
Library Building
or
4335 Root Road
North Olmsted, Ohio 44070
phone: (216)734-4598

(OVER PLEASE)

PLEASE GIVE ONLY ONE RESPONSE FOR EACH QUESTION

Date of your visit to the K.S.U. archives - ___/___/___ (mo/dy/yr).

1. Please check the one response that best describes you:

__ College Undergraduate at K.S.U.
__ College Undergraduate elsewhere - _____ (please specify)

__ Master's Student at K.S.U.
__ Master's Student elsewhere - _____ (please specify)

__ Doctoral Candidate at K.S.U.
__ Doctoral Candidate elsewhere - _____ (please specify)

__ Faculty Member at K.S.U.
__ Faculty Member elsewhere - _____ (please specify)

__ Other - _____ (please specify)

2. Please fill in the one blank most appropriate for you:

I am a college student and my major is _____.

I am a faculty member and my department is _____.

I do not fit either of the above categories, and my occupation is _____.

3. Have you ever used the Kent State University Archives before?

__ Yes __ No

4. Please check the one item below that best describes the project that brought you here today:

__ homework.
__ course paper.
__ research paper.
__ senior's thesis.
__ master's thesis.
__ PhD dissertation.
__ conference paper.
__ article for a journal, magazine, or newspaper.
__ writing a book.
__ for use in teaching.
__ genealogy.
__ personal interest.
__ FLIP.
__ other _____. (please specify)

5. What is the general area of your research today?

My topic concerns _____.

6. What was it that prompted you to search the K.S.U. Archives for information? Please check the one best response.

__ My teacher or professor suggested that I look here.
__ A friend, colleague, or fellow student suggested that I look here.
__ I was led here by a citation in a book or journal article.
__ I read about the archives in a magazine or a newspaper.
__ Someone else in the K.S.U. library directed me here.
__ Someone at another library or archives directed me here.
__ I called the archives and asked if the information I needed would be here.
__ I felt that this was the logical place to look.
__ I have done research here before and knew the information was here.
__ The library's computerized catalog told me the information was here.
__ other _____.
(please specify)

7. Did you find what you were looking for? Please check the one best response.

__ I found more than I was looking for.
__ I found exactly what I was looking for.
__ I found some of what I was looking for.
__ I found little of what I was looking for.
__ I found none of what I was looking for.

8. Did the amount of information you found meet the expectations you had before you visited the archives today? Please check the one best response.

__ I found more than I expected.
__ I found exactly what I expected.
__ I found some of what I expected.
__ I found little of what I expected.
__ I found none of what I expected.

9. How useful will this material be for your project? Please check the one best response.

__ Very useful.
__ Somewhat useful.
__ Not very useful.
__ Not useful at all.
__ I do not know yet.

10. What was the physical condition of the material you looked at? Please check the one best response.

__ excellent condition. __ fair condition. __ not applicable.
__ good condition. __ poor condition.

(OVER PLEASE)

11. Did you use any of the indexes available in the reading room to try to locate your material?

__ Yes. __ No.

If Yes, was the index helpful?

__ Yes. __ No.

12. Do you feel that the staff was helpful to you in your quest? Please check the one best response.

__ The staff was very helpful.
__ The staff was somewhat helpful.
__ The staff was not very helpful
__ The staff was not helpful at all.

13. Did you find the K.S.U. archives easy to use? Please check the one best response.

__ The archives was very easy to use.
__ The archives was somewhat easy to use.
__ The archives was somewhat difficult to use.
__ The archives was very difficult to use.

14. Please indicate how satisfied you are <u>overall</u> with your visit today to the K.S.U. archives.

__ I am very satisfied.
__ I am somewhat satisfied.
__ I am somewhat unsatisfied.
__ I am very unsatisfied.

15. Please use the space below for any clarifications, complaints, suggestions, or additional information:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for taking the time to make the K.S.U. Archives a better place to do research. Please deposit this questionnaire in the box by the reading room desk, or mail it to:

John Brunswick, Room #314, Library Building, Kent State University or 4335 Root Road, North Olmsted, Ohio 44070.

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